

Message Text

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47

ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 SS-15 SP-02 L-02 INR-07

PRS-01 SAM-01 RSC-01 /056 W
----- 018257

R 301430Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6831

AMEMBASSY OSLO

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 1988

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: BPRO, DM

SUBJ: NEGOTIATIONS FOR OIL CONCESSION RIGHTS IN DAHOMEY

REF COTONOU 1877

1. EMBASSY HAS HEARD UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT MIN OF PLAN DOCUMENT EXISTS WHICH NAMES A NORWEGIAN OIL COMPANY AS FIRM TO WHICH THE DAHOMEAN GOVT HAS DECIDED TO AWARD MOST OF THE FORMER UNION OIL CONCESSION IN DAHOMEY. ACCORDING TO THIS DOCUMENT, CONTRACT WILL BE SIGNED AS SOON AS THE NORWEGIAN GOVT APPROVES THE AGREEMENT. DOCUMENT SAYS FURTHER THAT TERMS PROPOSED BY US OIL FIRMS (ROSARIO, BUTES AND ANSCHUTZ) WERE UNACCEPTABLE TO MRGD, SO NORWEGIAN PROPOSAL WAS ACCEPTED.

2. EMBASSY HAD HEARD OF VISIT OF A NORWEGIAN OIL FIRM REP SEVERAL WEEKS AGO AT THE SAME TIME AS THE VISIT OF REPS OF TWO AMERICAN OIL COMPANIES. WE DO NOT KNOW THE NAME OF THE FIRM, BUT IT IS NOT A STATE RUN CORPORATION ACCORDING TO OUR INFO.

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3. TERRITORY INVOLVED IS MAJOR PORTION OF FORMER CONCESSION

WHICH UNION OIL OF CALIFORNIA RELINQUISHED IN MARCH 74 AFTER THE GOVT TERMINATED ITS CONTRACT WITH UNION TWO MONTHS EARLIER. PART OF THE EX-UNION TERRITORY HAS ALREADY BEEN AWARDED TO ROYAL DUTCH/SHELL TO ADD TO THEIR CONCESSION WHICH ADJOINED THE FORMER UNION ONE. SEVERAL AMERICAN OIL FIRMS HAD EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE TAKING OVER OF THE EX-UNION CONCESSION, BUT ALL AGREED THAT THE TERMS PROPOSED BY THE DAHOMEAN GOVT WOULD MAKE ANY VENTURE UNPROFITABLE. NONETHELESS, EMBASSY HAD BELIEVED THAT TWO FIRMS, BUTTES AND ANSCHUTZ, WERE STILL CONTINUING THEIR TALKS WITH THE GOVT -- AT LEAST UNTIL THE NATIONALIZATION MEASURES WERE ANNOUNCED ON DEC 4.

4. FOR OSLO: WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFO YOU MAY HAVE RE THE NORWEGIAN FIRM THAT SEEMS TO BE PREPARED TO UNDERTAKE EXPLOITATION AND EXPLORATION FOR OIL IN DAHOMEY.

5. FOR DEPT: DUE TO SENSITIVE NATURE OF OUR SOURCE, RECOMMEND THAT THE ABOVE INFO NOT BE PASSED TO ANY OF FIRMS THAT HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN UNION CONCESSION (SPECIFICALLY ROSARIO RESOURCES) UNTIL THE STORY GETS OUT HERE. DEPT COULD HOWEVER USE IT TO CONFIRM ANY INFO THE COMPANIES MIGHT HAVE PICKED UP ON THEIR OWN.
ENGLE

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